

## Reading

You are going to read about a young American woman, Elizabeth Blackwell, whose ambition was to be the first woman doctor in the world. Nowadays, in most countries, any man or

woman who has the ability, can go to college and train to become a doctor. As the story you are going to read shows, things were very different in Miss Blackwell's time.

### A What do you think?

Work in pairs to discuss these questions:

- 1 Are there many women doctors in Pakistan? How many do you know?
- 2 Would you like to be treated by a woman doctor or would you prefer a male doctor? Why/why not?
- 3 In the medical profession, women should only be allowed to be nurses. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- 4 If women doctors treated only women patients, what difficulties might this cause?
- 5 Can women be successful doctors? What problems might they face?
- 6 Do you know any male nurses? Do you think they share any of the problems which women doctors may have?



### B Surveying the passage

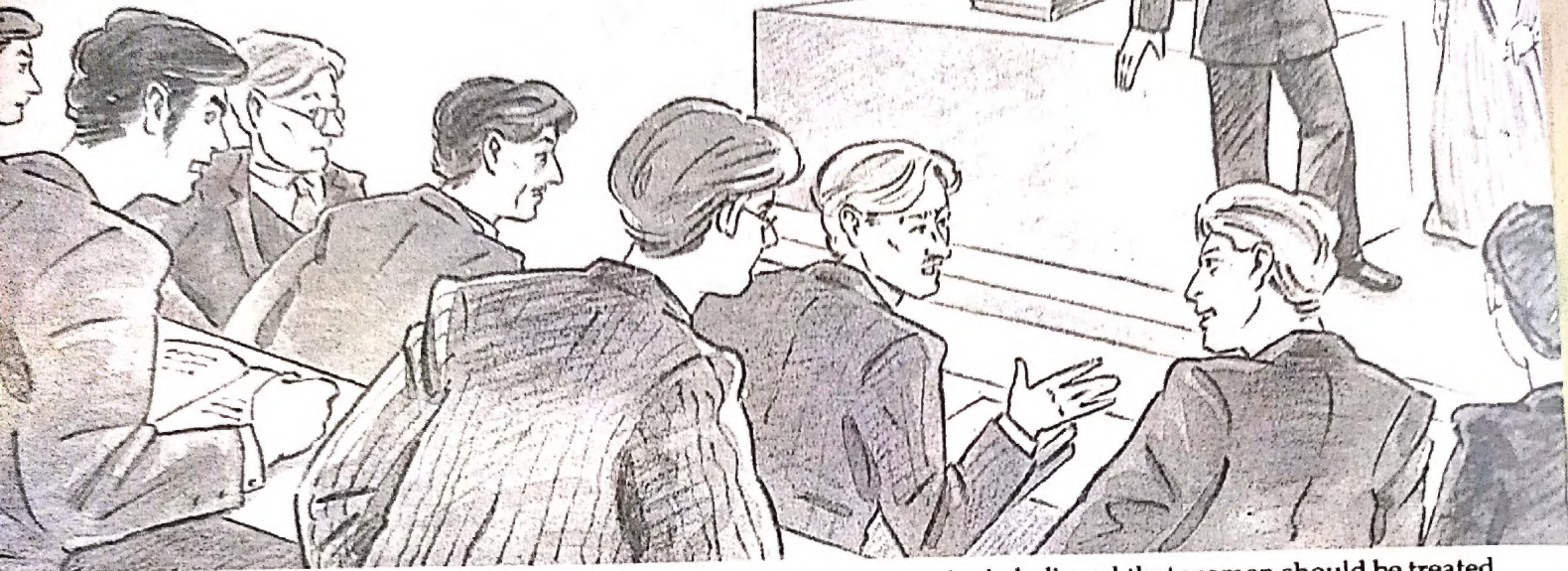
Before you read the story, on pages 54 and 55, look at the title, the picture and the source of the passage. Then read the first and the last sentences. Now think of possible answers to the questions below and note them down briefly.

- 1 In the picture, who are the people sitting down? What sex are they? *Male, Female*
- 2 Who is the man standing up and who is the woman beside him? *Dean*
- 3 What kind of room does the picture show? *Lecture room*
- 4 Is the scene in the picture modern? If not, did it take place about ten, a hundred or two hundred years ago? How do you know? *one hundred years ago*
- 5 What is the door, referred to in the title of the passage? *Success*
- 6 The passage is taken from a book. In the book's title, who does They refer to? *Keep trying*
- 7 Is the story fact or fiction? *Fact*
- 8 Read the closing sentence of the passage again (transformation means change). What class was it and who was the lady? *Medical lecture room*  
*Com from one lady*



# The Door Swings Open

(From *They Dared to be Doctors* by Mary St. J Fancourt.)



Nowadays, with women playing an ever-increasing role in all kinds of careers and professions, it is difficult to understand that there was a time when no medical school would accept a woman. They all said that only a man could be a doctor. An American, Elizabeth Blackwell, was determined to become the first woman doctor in the world. After a great deal of delay and opposition, she received, to her great surprise, a letter from the dean of Geneva College informing her that she had been accepted.

Much later, Elizabeth discovered what had actually happened when her application had been received by the college authorities. None of them wanted to have a woman student, but they did not wish to offend the influential Philadelphia doctor who had recommended her, so they hit on the expedient of turning the decision over to the students' general meeting. They were quite certain that this would result in this alarming idea being turned down. However, when the student body met, many of them thought it would be amusing to be the only medical college in the country which could boast that it was training some sort of Amazon\* as a woman doctor. Some

genuinely believed that women should be treated equally, while others thought of the whole thing as a joke. So the vote in favour was carried unanimously, and the college authorities found, with dismay, that they would now have to admit Elizabeth.

A few days after receiving the notification of her acceptance, Elizabeth was on the train for the two-day journey to Geneva College.

Her entry into the medical school there could hardly have been more nerve-racking. The dean asked her to follow him on to the platform and formally introduced her to the assembled students. Fifty years later, an elderly doctor who was a student at the college at the time, recalled the scene.

The class, numbering about 150 students, was composed largely of young men from the neighbouring towns. They were rude, boisterous, and riotous beyond comparison. On several occasions the residents of the neighbourhood sent written protests to the college, threatening to have the college indicted as a nuisance if the disturbances did not cease.

\*Amazon: a strong female warrior.



During lectures it was often almost impossible to hear the professors owing to the confusion. He goes on to describe the dramatic moment when Elizabeth was introduced. The students had heard no more about her after they had sent their decision to the college two or three weeks previously, so her introduction was a complete surprise.

'One morning, unexpectedly, a lady entered the lecture room with the dean; she was quite small of stature, plainly dressed, appeared diffident and retiring but had a firm and

determined expression on her face. Her entry into the bedlam of confusion acted like magic on every student. Each hurriedly sought his seat, and the utmost silence prevailed. For the first time a lecture was given without the slightest interruption, and every word could be heard as distinctly as it would be if there had been but a single person in the room. The sudden transformation of this class from a band of lawless desperadoes to gentlemen by the mere presence of a lady, proved to be permanent in its effects.'

Before doing exercise D, check your answers to exercises A, B and C.

## D Words in context

1 Find words or phrases in the passage with these meanings. The numbers in brackets refer to paragraphs.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| a. jobs that need a lot of education and training (1) <i>Professions</i>                          | f. a plan intended to benefit those who made the plan (2) <i>Charitable</i> |
| b. had a strong desire to (1) <i>Determination</i>  | g. getting someone else to decide (2) <i>Second</i>                         |
| c. effort to stop or prevent something happening (1) <i>Opposition</i>                            | h. rejected (2) <i>Turned Down</i>  |
| d. the people who control something, e.g., an organization, government, etc. (2) <i>Authority</i> | i. be proud that (2) <i>Amazing</i>   |
| e. to upset someone or hurt his/her feelings (2) <i>offend</i>                                    | j. really/sincerely (2) <i>Genuinely</i>                                    |
|   | k. in support (2) <i>In favour</i>  |
|   | l. approved without anyone disagreeing (2) <i>Unanimously</i>               |

2 Complete the sentences by matching the words in box A with those in box B. The numbers in brackets refer to paragraphs.

A	B
An influential doctor (2) is	to have legal action taken against a person or organization.
The student body (2) is	news or information.
Notification (3) means	to introduce someone in a serious or official manner.
A nerve-racking (4) situation is	noisy and disorderly.
Formally introduce (4) means	one who has power and importance.
Boisterous and riotous (4) means	one who is not confident or is shy.
To be indicted (4) means	one that worries or frightens you.
A diffident (5) person is	a very noisy place; like a madhouse.
A bedlam (5) is	silence spread through the room.
Silence prevailed (5) means	all the student members of a school or college.



## E Using new words

S1 is a member of the Geneva College authorities and, many years later, is describing what happened when Elizabeth Blackwell applied to study medicine. S2 is listening to the story but sometimes S1 can't think of the right word to say, so S2 helps him.

Work in pairs. Do not look at your partner's part of the exercise.

**S1** Read aloud to S2 the account given below. Where you seeer . . . , pause and wait for S2 to help you. Note down what S2 says and check the words together at the end.

Yes, I remember the incident quite well. Miss Blackwell wanted to become a doctor but a lot of people were against the idea and when her application was considered there was a lot of er . . . However, she had been recommended by a very influential doctor and, of course, we didn't want him to beer . . . We didn't know what to do until someone suggested that the student body should be asked to consider the matter. We were sure that when they saw her application they woulder . . . So we decided to turn the matter over to them.

However, the result surprised us. They voted to admit Miss Blackwell. In fact the vote in her favour waser . . . Some students wanted the college to be the first to train a woman doctor so that they coulder . . . Others thought women should be treated equally and this belief was quiteer . . . So Miss Blackwell had to be admitted by the collegeer . . . They had no other choice. So she became the first woman to enter the medicaler . . .

**S2** Listen to S1 and when he hesitates, supply him with the correct word or phrase from the box below. Write 1 beside the first word you give him, 2 beside the second, etc. Check your answers together at the end.

unanimous	profession	authorities	turn it down
offended	boast about it	opposition	genuine

## F What does it refer to?

Complete the table by writing down what each of the words listed on the left refers to. In the second column you are given the paragraph and the line number in the passage where you can find the word. (para. 1 l.9 means paragraph 1, line 9.) The first one is done as an example.

she	para. 1 l.9	Elizabeth Blackwell
they	para. 2 l.4	
They	para. 2 l.8	
it	para. 2 l.13	
He	para. 4 l.17	
it	para. 5 l.11	
its	para. 5 l.15	



## G What happened first?

In her story about Elizabeth Blackwell, the writer tells us about a number of events that took place. Some of these are listed below. Put the events in the correct order in which they happened. Write a. beside the first, b. beside the second, etc.

- |      |   |       |  |
|------|---|-------|--|
| b) 1 | The college authorities considered Elizabeth's application. | 1) 7  | The students fell completely silent.                       |
| h) 2 | Elizabeth set off for Geneva College.                       | d) 8  | The students approved Elizabeth's application.             |
| c) 3 | The students considered Elizabeth's application.            | 9) 9  | Elizabeth applied to Geneva College.                       |
| i) 4 | Elizabeth arrived at Geneva College.                        | f) 10 | Elizabeth received her letter of admission.                |
| m) 5 | The students began to behave like gentlemen.                | 3) 11 | Elizabeth appeared in the lecture room for the first time. |
| e) 6 | The students informed the authorities of their decision.    | k) 12 | Elizabeth was introduced to the students by the dean.      |

## H Think about it

- |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| 1 | Why do you think people said that only a man could be a doctor?   | 3 | Why does the writer describe Elizabeth's introduction to the students as <i>dramatic</i> ? |
| 2 | Who played an important part in getting Elizabeth Blackwell accepted at Geneva College? Give two ways in which he helped. | 4 | Do you think that women are treated equally with men in the medical profession nowadays?   |

## I Summary

- 1 Below is an account of Elizabeth Blackwell's experiences at Geneva College. However, the person who wrote it has some of the facts wrong. Compare this account with the passage on pages 54 and 55 then rewrite it, correcting any errors.

Elizabeth Blackwell wanted to become the first woman doctor in America. She applied to Geneva College for a place on the medical course and her application was immediately accepted. Both the college authorities and the students had considered Elizabeth's application. Surprisingly, the students approved it by a large majority and informed the college authorities who were delighted at the students' decision.

Elizabeth arrived at the college and shortly afterwards was introduced by the

students to the dean. The students, numbering over a hundred and fifty were polite, quiet and well-behaved. In fact, the residents of the area had congratulated the college on the good behaviour of its students. When Elizabeth entered the lecture room for the first time, tall and smartly dressed but with a frightened expression on her face, the students stood up and cheered. The noise was so great that it was impossible to hear a single word of what the dean said.

- 2 Use the list of events in exercise G above to give an account of what happened to Elizabeth at Geneva College. You may join some of the sentences together if you want but remember you may have to change the wording. Below are some link words to help you.

First, second, third, etc.		
Then	Next	After that
Before	After	When

Note: Only use link words when they are necessary to make the sense clear.